

Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District

2490 Main Road - Tiverton, RI 02878 - Phone (401) 816-5667

ERICD Board Meeting

September 11, 2012

7:00 PM

Chairman Walter Elwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present were: ERICD: Directors: Walter Elwell, Emerson Wildes, Dick Hart, Ron Mucci; District Manager: Jessica Blackledge; NRCS: Melissa Hayden; RISCC: Eric Offenbergh, Ramona LeBlanc, Jill Osgood.

I. Minutes: Minutes of the August 14, 2012 meeting were declared accepted as presented with one correction: Item IV, NRCS Report – omit sentence 4.

II. Financial Report: Reports were declared accepted as presented with one correction: Rent expense is overstated. Jill will correct and distribute via e-mail to the board.

III. New Business:

A. Eric Offenbergh attended the meeting to give an update on progress made in the last two years concerning the State Conservation

Committee and the districts. The reorganization has led to higher efficiency and streamlined administrative tasks. He is encouraged by the improved visibility of the districts and the programs offered.

B. MOU/Reorganization Policy: The MOU between the districts and the State Committee is currently being revised. The goal of the MOU is to clearly establish the roles and responsibilities of all parties in various work related scenarios.

C. Fee for Service: A brochure is in process that lists various service items available through the Conservation Districts to landowners, farmers, cities, towns, etc. Also in process is a Resource Library that will showcase board member and employee abilities, skill sets, and expertise. Both handouts will be given to each district to distribute to potential clients as marketing tools.

D. District Book/Director's Handbook: Each district will receive a Director's Handbook that will state the overall policies of their district.

The Handbook is an administrative guide that will consist of specific policies, training, conduct, protocols, procedures, roles, responsibilities, etiquette, etc. for various issues such as staff sharing, holidays, dress code, meetings, etc. A sub-committee will meet during the next 3-6 months to update and revise the existing handbooks. Director's and board members are strongly urged to attend these meetings.

E. Annual Meeting & Awards Night: No motion was made or discussion presented.

F. 8 Rod Management Conditions: The field needs to be mowed. Emerson made a motion to find someone to take care of the field

through a lease and also keep a section for the Eastern District. Dick seconded; motion passed. Dick and Emerson volunteered to visit the property to research other areas that may need maintenance.

G. Bills: A motion was made to pay current bills that include employee monthly fringe & expenses of \$314.26, telephone expense of \$90.24, Director's Stipends of \$460.00, utility expense of \$29.43, and RI Farm Bureau Dues of \$40.00. Emerson/Dick; unanimous. Payment for NACD dues in the amount of up to \$775.00 was tabled until December's meeting.

H. Other:

1. Family Insurance Company sent a letter to the board stating that the liability coverage for raw milk and raw milk products will be reduced.

2. Revised Budget: An updated budget was presented that includes related income and expenses for renewed NRCS agreements, and lower administrative overhead expense.

3. Annual Meeting: Emerson made a motion for the board to host an Annual Meeting & Awards Night for the 2012 year. Emerson amended the motion to include the date for the meeting to be in November. Ron seconded the amendment; motion passed. Dick seconded the original motion; motion passed.

IV. NRCS Report:

Melissa Hayden submitted a written report. NRCS is finishing their fiscal year end contracts which close at the end of September. Contract maintenance/modifications are on-going and contract

reviews are complete. Total EQIP obligated in 2012 for Eastern District is 4 contracts at \$165,743 in Bristol County and 61 contracts at \$812,168 in Newport County. Total AMA obligated is 1 contract at \$10,950 in Bristol County and 6 contracts at \$33,320 in Newport County. Melissa was asked to provide a report at the next meeting that includes the total amount of funding that came in and was paid out through the districts in RI for the 2012 fiscal year.

V. Old Business

A. Satellite NRCS Office:

The sign for the Satellite Office has been purchased and is at the printers. NRCS personnel are currently at the office 2 days per week. Phou will submit his plan to the Regional Office this week for the Field Office of the Future.

B. NRCS Agreements Renewal: See VI. D: RISCC Report.

VI. Reports

A. District Manager: Jessica submitted a written report.

1. Geese: The Geese Project proposal will be submitted to DEM by the end of the week. Data and final development reports to US FWS will begin this month.

2. Outreach 2012: Jessica attended the Fee for Service, Field Office of the Future, and State Technical Team Meeting along with other project meetings and training. Technical assistance to farmers and landowners is on-going.

3. FFOS: Site visits, interviews and conservation plan developments are on-going.

4. Petty Cash: Office supplies of \$102.96 and postage of \$8.03 were expensed out of the petty cash account. Ron made a motion to replenish the petty cash account to \$200.00. Emerson seconded; motion passed.

5. The RINHS Annual Meeting & Lecture Series is scheduled to begin 9/19/12 and the **URI/Rhody Native Propagation Workshop Series** will begin 10/18/12.

6. Jessica distributed a report from Becca on the **Farm Equipment Bank Feasibility Study**.

7. Jessica will attend the **RI DEM Land Link Meeting** scheduled for 9/27/12 and the **State Conservation Committee Meeting**.

B. Chair:

Walter reported that all parties involved have approved the final draft for a nearby farm.

C. Directors:

1. Ron: Nothing new to report.

2. Emerson: Pardon Gray Day is scheduled for 9/15/12. Deer and raccoons are invading his garden.

3. Dick: Blueberry crops yields are lower than average this season due to last year's hurricane. Nationwide, strawberry and apple yields are lower than average and the price of chemical fertilizer has increased.

D. RISCC:

1. The Outreach and Engineering agreements will be signed shortly. The **Geese or Rivers agreement** may be signed in the future.

- 2. The first Director's Handbook sub-committee meeting is scheduled for 9/20/12.**
 - 3. The Fee for Service document will include 3 tiers of services.**
 - 4. The State Conservation Committee meeting has been postponed.**
- Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 9, 2012 at 7:00 pm.